

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND ELDERS
INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES, INC.
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
ANNUAL REPORT 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The general economic slowdown in the country has had significant impact particularly on small non-profit organizations. While actual cash contributions were admittedly very difficult to solicit in 2009, the zeal and resolve of ACE IPI to help the less fortunate children and youth, including the elderly remains as strong as ever. In fact, our total cash donations received from local sources amounted to almost P 170,000 while in-kind donations were estimated at almost P198,000-these figures being the highest in 3 years. We have therefore abided with our key commitments to two target mission sectors namely the children-in-conflict with the law (CICL) particularly in CRADLE and some of the underprivileged youth in selected communities in two cities: Paranaque and Kalookan.

A. GIVING HOPE and the CRADLE EXPERIENCE:

During the year, a total of 113 cicl were taken into custody by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, DILG at its Center for Restorative Activities, Development and Learning Experiences (CRADLE) in Camp Bagong Diwa. But the disposition of their cases are being managed and monitored by the DSWD Social Workers duly designated at this Center. A total of 102 were eventually released either on recognizance (back to their families) or diverted to other accredited centers with residential programs. The cicl population on a per month basis ranges from 45 to 65. Historically, the number increases during the last quarter of the year. Hence, ACE IPI was able to serve about 168 cicl on the average for a year.

The transfer of CRADLE to a new site created more problems for all- the authorities, volunteers and the cicl themselves. Moving about within a small perimeter-area with substandard facilities, we nevertheless felt that we had to think of ways and means to effectively pursue our mission given the existing limitations.

Hence, we still were able to conduct 42 Values Formation sessions for an average of 50 cicl every week. These sessions were facilitated, by schedules, by Tess Gomez and pastoral volunteers Gloria Andres and Bobby Choy. The sessions include lectures, sharing and group dynamics. We were also accorded full cooperation by the Warden and the DSWD as they required the attendance of all confined minors regardless of religious affiliations in our sessions. Notably, a Personhood-Restorative Values Education Program referred to as "Lakbay-Pagbabago" was developed and implemented for 9 consecutive Wednesdays from June to August 2009. This aimed at helping the young offenders gain a better understanding of themselves, their relationship with the self, family, society and God and the environment. The Program also included discussions on active

non-violence and the implications of crime within the context of the restorative justice paradigm that espouses healing and reconciliation. A simple graduation ceremony was thereafter held for 54 cicl.

The regular-monthly Eucharistic Celebrations presided by Fr. Simplicio Roxas further stressed the essence of Faith and the need for continuing formation.

While the level of positive behavioral change expected of the cicl may not be substantially measured, some indicators insofar as their attitudes and overt actions are concerned, show a certain degree of improvement, especially among those who have stayed in the Center for more than 6 months. Other than the foiled attempted escape of about 13 cicl in April and a few petty personal quarrels, there has not been any recorded major trouble during the year. Many of the cicl were observed to have become more respectful and helpful in their "domestic" tasks, a little more participative during sessions and believing more in the power of prayer. Those cicl who have not been visited by their families for a long time are gradually learning to cope with the emotional pain. Many of them heeded our call for "pagparaya" (unselfishness) and controlling anger.

Meanwhile, Art/painting classes facilitated by Jess Gellada were held for 27 Fridays with an average of 47 cicl-participants. More than just creating interest in the arts, bringing out artistic potentials and improving skills in painting, these classes have also become venues for some wounded young souls to express their personal sentiments. In March, we submitted the 3 painting-entries of the cicl to the International Art Contest facilitated by the Catholic Commission on Prison Pastoral Care.

The special activities such as the Annual Summer Sportsfest and occasions like Valentine's, Lent/Easter, Prison Awareness Week and Christmas were all happily celebrated through the generosity of constant partners like the Our Lady of Unity Parish, Covenants Inc., Kiwanis Club of Malate, Franciscan Sisters of the Holy Adorers and some individual friends including Fr. Lambert Legaspino, our Spiritual Adviser. The cicl were provided with various gift packs, good lunches and prizes.

Usually, before or after our weekly sessions, some cicl approached us for counseling. Three of them who have eventually been released were visited by Bobby Choy in their homes for follow-ups.

The health and sanitation needs of the cicl were also addressed through the monthly supply of basic toiletries e.g. bath and laundry soaps and toothpaste, and occasionally with cleaning aids for their dormitories.

B. The CHALLENGES of YOUTH EMPOWERMENT and the Y4Y PROGRAM:

Following the wholistic approach of addressing the concerns of the human person, i.e. his body, mind and spirit, ACE IPI continued, through its 4-Component- Youth for Youth Program to "invest" its resources in undertakings that would ensure the physical, spiritual-moral, intellectual, social and even the economic development of selected underserved youth and their families in target

areas namely, Lopez, Lovewin, Napoleon and Riverville in Paranaque City and Magdalena/Hillcrest area in Kalookan City. Each of these areas has a Coordinator who assisted us in monitoring school attendance and the overall situation of the youth beneficiaries and their families.

For the Educational Assistance-component, a total of 28 qualified youth members received about P1,000/each worth of required school supplies while 24 of them were supported with their daily transport fare and about P350.00 each worth of P.E. uniform. A total of 5 college students received each a P5,000 annual support and another 5 availed the DATAMEX vocational course-certificates. These youth members were also given access to the internet facilities of ACE office for their research assignments. About 7 of the youth members and their parents were engaged in dialogue/counseling sessions in an effort to resolve either family issues or academic concerns. We always stressed to the beneficiaries that education is the best weapon against poverty.

For this component, we were able to get about P100,000-total support from various individuals and the Manila Jaycees.

Under the Competency Development component, ACE IPI conducted the Annual Summer Computer Training Workshop that produced 16 graduates for Basic and another 16 for Advance. A 10-session- English Proficiency program was also conducted by a volunteer English Instructor, Rina Lim. However, of the 35 attendees, only 19 completed the sessions. A painting class facilitated by Mr. Gellada also was opened and 16 youth were able to finish the 16 sessions. All these considerably contributed to building the capabilities of these young minds. A simple “Araw ng Pasasalamat” was henceforth held in recognition of those who completed the trainings with special gifts to those who excelled.

During the first quarter of the year, ACE IPI President Virgie Bruce herself handled separately the meetings-cum- formation with about 26 youth and their parents in Paranaque. But by the second half of the year, ACE IPI significantly adopted a key strategy – targeting the parents of our Y4Y members through the conduct of a Family Enrichment Program as the core module of our Values Formation Y4Y Component. This series of input-discussions and interaction initially offered a good opportunity for both single and couple-parent-participants to rekindle intimacy in their relationships with their spouses, the positive effects of which, such as love for God and each other, respect and open communication would eventually be experienced by their own children. These children could inevitably learn to develop these same virtues and values in dealing not only with their siblings and parents but also with their peers, co-students, persons in authority and the community at large. The Program was started in June and once-a-month thereof on weekends and jointly attended by an average of 28 parents and 25 youth. We are fortunate to have as resource persons two trained pastoral formators- Mr. & Mrs. Rey and Mel Sangalang who gave their free volunteer services. Meanwhile, Tess Gomez facilitated all the 11 sessions for the youth and parents in Kalookan.

Aside from these sessions, about 7 to 10 Y4Y members and their parents, from the Lopez area, Paranaque actively participated in worship and devotional activities in the parish.

Every December, ACE IPI facilitates an Annual Recollection with Christmas Fellowship for all the regular Y4Y youth members and their families. For 2009, a total of 95 people attended this much-awaited whole day gathering with the theme “ Pasko: Salo-Salo sa Pamilya”. A Holy Mass was also celebrated by Fr. Legaspino. A total of 23 youth, 14 individual parents and 4 couples were given certificates of recognition and simple gift-tokens for their perfect attendance. Gift packages worth P550.00 each were distributed to the 43 regular Y4Y member-families. As a way of acknowledging their services and supplementary support, we gave annual gratuity tokens to all 31 of our regular volunteers, resource persons and donors.

Noticeably, the regular youth participants of formation activities from the two cities have become more open in sharing their appreciation of each other; apparently more ready to forgive those who have hurt them and no longer shy to speak in small and big groups.

We have also started delegating some tasks to certain Y4Y members identified to have the time and talent including the potentials of being leaders in their own way. Some of them assisted in simple documentation of activities while others took the initiative of leading and directing younger children during special parish activities. Some mothers also helped out. At the height of Typhoon Ondoy, three of our youth members personally tried to save lives and properties. These are all part of the Community Action/Volunteerism component of Y4Y.

For a number of these Y4Y activities, Trinidad Wong, current Treasurer, has been extending her utmost support for snacks and meals.

C. The OPPORTUNITY to EARN:

Six mothers are actively involved in the actual production, repacking and selling of ACE livelihood products i.e., detergent powder, cleaning solutions, dishwashing gel and fabric conditioners. ACE facilitates the purchase of raw materials.

D. LINKING ARMS:

As part of its Advocacy and Networking Program, ACE IPI remained a regular institutional member of PAYO or the Philippine Action for Youth Offenders and officially attended 5 meetings during the year. We supported the proposed legislation on prohibiting Corporal Punishment on Children.

We promoted ACE IPI to the Phinma company’s “Hero Network” by joining its Volunteers Fair. ACE IPI also continues to be the lead volunteer organization in CRADLE and as such, continued to be representative in the PRAISED Alliance of interfaith volunteer groups serving the BJMP-supervised jails.

We also submitted the final concept paper on our proposed “Youth in Restorative Transformation” project to the Bases Holdings and Management Inc., a quasi-government corporation for possible funding. We have yet to wait for the BHMI decision by June 2010.

E. An OUTREACH to the ELDERS:

ACE IPI staff and volunteers visited the Tahanan Ni Maria in Carmona, Cavite for abandoned and indigent elderly. We gave about 100 residents each a large serving of "arroz caldo" and bottled mineral water; interacted with about 54 of them through singing and fun games. Some could not join us because they were physically ill while others were not yet psychologically ready to join such activities. One of our members, Selie Tajon gave most of the provisions for food. The Franciscan Sisters meanwhile gave them colorful dusters.

F. AWARDS RECEIVED:

- 1.) Last June 5, 2009 the officers of ACE IPI attended the year's Gawad Geny Lopez Jr. Bayaning Pilipino Awards Night on behalf of NANAY, Inc. one of the five recipients of this year's "Galing Bayanihan, America" Award. NANAY, Inc. was recognized for providing concrete holistic programs and supportive services to fellow Filipinos particularly the elders, through active involvement in the Filipino-American communities in the entire state of Florida.
- 2.) Ms. Gloria Andres, upon recommendation of ACE IPI, received a "Gawad Paglilingkod" in recognition of its continuing services for adult and youth offenders in Muntinlupa penitentiary and at CRADLE. This annual national recognitions are being given by the Catholic Bishops Commission on Prison Pastoral Care to volunteers and workers who have regularly ministered to prisoners for at least 3 years.

G. OTHER SERVICES:

Virgie Bruce coordinated with the Philippine and Taiwan Dental Associations including the Taal Charm Foundation for a special Dental Mission in Taal, Batangas that benefited about 1,458 persons, 250 of which are children and youth.

Crisis intervention aid was extended to 14 Y4Y youth members and their siblings specifically on their medical needs. Relief goods were distributed to about 43 Y4Y families in Paranaque who were affected by Typhoon Ondoy

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H. ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS:

Website updating was completed up to April 2009 only following the proposal to have it done yearly instead of monthly.

A monitoring system on status of Y4Y Program beneficiaries and benefits received has been put in place. The same has been placed to monitor donations for restricted educational funds. Full time office-based volunteers Amy de Leon

and Myrna Herais, including driver-messenger, Danny Corporal performed these operational tasks.

Meanwhile, all reportorial requirements, permits and licenses were completed on time through the able assistance of our volunteer Auditor, Ethel Condinera.